

Damasonium californicum (Benth.)
fringed waterplantain
Alismataceae (Waterplantain Family)

Status: State Threatened
Rank: G4S1

General Description: A small semi-aquatic plant with erect to floating, long-petioled leaves and a naked inflorescence. The showy flowers are clustered in an umbel with white to pink petals. Achenes are flattened, strongly ribbed on each margin, and depressed in between; both the body and beak are about 1/5 in. (4 mm).

Identification Tips: *Damasonium californicum* can be distinguished from *Alisma* spp. by its fringed petals. This species can also be confused with *Sagittaria* spp.; however, *Sagittaria* spp. have arrow-head shaped leaves whereas *D. californicum* has linear to oblong-lanceolate leaves. The extended beak of the flattened achenes in *D. californicum* is also distinctive.

Phenology: Identifiable June through July.

Range: The species occurs from southern Oregon to central California and east to southwest Idaho and western Nevada. It is peripheral in Washington, known from one site near the Columbia River in Klickitat County.

Habitat: Fringed waterplantain occurs on damp ground, in vernal pools, on margins of intermittent streams, in sloughs, and on mud flats in marshy places at low elevations. Observed associates in Washington are European waterplantain, (*Alisma plantago-aquatica*), white water buttercup (*Ranunculus aquaticus*), and *Downingia* spp.

Ecology: *Damasonium californicum* can grow in and near the water's edge of shallow ponds. The population in Washington occurs on basalt scabland.

State Status Comments: This species is uncommon and confined to a habitat subject to frequent use and alteration. The one population in Washington has over 1000 plants.

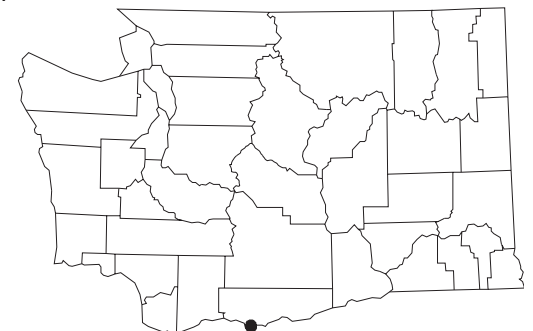
Inventory Needs: Additional inventory is needed in Washington and Oregon.

Damasonium californicum
fringed waterplantain



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Known distribution of
Damasonium californicum
in Washington



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Photo by Robert Moseley

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Threats and Management Concerns: Current threats include hydrologic alteration and grazing. Cattle were observed near the population at the most recent sighting.

Comments: The species may also be known as *Machaerocarpus californicus*, as it is referred to in Hitchcock (1964).

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, and J.W. Thompson. 1964. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest, Part 1: Vascular Cryptogams Gymnosperms and Monocotyledons*. University of Washington Press, Seattle. 914 pp.